

PEOPLE & THINGS

OF all the delegates to the Geneva Conference, none has so long an experience of the lakeside city as Mr. Eden. But it is not his seniority that prompted a small crowd to gather each afternoon on the pavement outside the Hotel Beau Rivage to cheer him on his way. Normally the most cool-hearted of people, the Genevois regard Mr. Eden with uninhibited affection.

The local newspapers devote a daily bulletin to the details of his suit and tie; and if he is tired, as he was last Wednesday, and goes to bed at 7.15, this too becomes the object of solicitous comment.

Autre Temps . . .

MR. EDEN himself, now driven to seek the tranquillity of an outlying villa, may well regret the Geneva of twenty or twenty-five years ago, when conferences were conducted with seigniorial dignity and there was hardly a policeman to be seen. The Beau Rivage then was a cross between an annexe of the Foreign Office and a large country house, and Mr. Litvinov could stroll, free and unmolested, by the lake in the evening. Today the Beau Rivage is like Grand Central Station; and as for Mr. Litvinov's successor—his bullet-proof '35 car, mysterious comings and goings and Praetorian guard of burly plug-uglies contrast disagreeably with the normal serenity of Genevan life.

Pioneer! O Pioneer!

MR. WELLS COATES—the architect, among other things, of Athenaeum Court, Piccadilly, the National Film Theatre, and London's pioneer modern flats in Lawn Road, Hampstead—does not suffer, as so many of his colleagues have suffered, from the tyranny of local authorities.

His next project—that of the new town of Iroquois, on the banks of the enlarged St. Lawrence seaway—is in fact one of the largest undertakings ever commissioned from a British architect. It comprises not merely a town of 40,000 inhabitants, with its industries, parks, and administrative centre, but also two complete harbours at which ocean-going ships will be able to berth.

Understatement

MR. COATES is the most ebullient of men, and I was glad to notice that, even while grappling with the impersonal problems implicit in so enormous a venture, he did not forget the minutiae of civilised living—a

By ATTICUS

Chinese restaurant, for instance (Mr. Coates is a celebrated amateur chef), and a regatta course in which full advantage will be taken of the immense new breadth of the St. Lawrence. At the thought, moreover, of the day when his harbours will first be opened to shipping, his habitual magniloquence deserted him. "An interesting moment," he said. "I intend to be there."

Deceivers

GENUINE novelty is rare at the Royal Academy. I was delighted, therefore, to note the prominence which has been given, in the Small South Room at



A detail from Maxwell Armfield's "Homage aux Trouvères."

Burlington House, to the small but flourishing school of *trompe-l'œil* painters.

Whether a really sophisticated butterfly would be taken in by Mr. Maxwell Armfield's leafage, I do not for me to say; but I know that Mr. Whidborne's carafe seemed to me to have strayed, half-emptied, from the well-stocked tables of the Academy Banquet. And as for the volume of devotions which lies open on Mr. Whidborne's other contribution to the Academy—I doubt if Mr. Maggs himself could tell it from the original.

Age of the Boob

I ASSOCIATE myself wholeheartedly with the campaign to keep alive the independent bookseller whose richly stocked mind and overstuffed shelves are part of the essential human fabric of our towns.

The existence of these literary treasure-houses is even more precarious in the United States. The other day, for example, it was reported that the famous Peabody Book Shop of Baltimore, which H. L. Mencken made famous, has had to close down for lack of custom.

In a scolding pronouncement the proprietor asserts that the book business in America is on the rocks. He blames television, the book clubs and the "age of the boob."

It can happen here.

The New Vandalism

THE destruction of beauty at the taxpayers' expense must somehow be stopped. Last week-end I personally inspected a piece of vandalism which is quite awe-inspiring in its flagrancy—nothing less than the spoliation of two miles of the White Cliffs of England between St. Margaret's Bay and Dover, one of the most beautiful walks in the country.

Here the military have caused to be erected what can only be described as a two-mile nig-nem—a

five-foot high, close stockade of stakes and wire, just wide enough for two pigs to jostle along side by side. Through two-inch spaces the beauty of the English Channel and the hazy coast of France can be seen only when the pig stops and peers through the bars.

Ye Military Secrettes

THE object of this truly breath-taking enterprise is to shield from hikers the coastal batteries and radar installations which have been open to the winds of heaven and the eyes of our enemies since the end of the war, and aerial photographs of which are surely some of the oldest in the Kremlin.

Defending his point of view, the spokesman of Eastern Command further endeared himself to the local council by saying that "they were lucky they didn't live in Russia or they wouldn't be able to get within twelve miles of their cliffs."

In fairness I should add that, as a concession to the military conception of beauty-lovers, the large signposts which direct you into the stockade are inscribed Cliffe Path.

It is some comfort to be assured that this piece of buffoonery will be knocked flat by the first gales or the first batch of summer hikers. At the same time some "rond de cuir" in Eastern Command has spent £1,600 of public money making the Army look incredibly cadish.

A Man from Manitoba

MR. RONALD TURNER, Treasurer and Minister of Commerce in the Manitoba Legislature, now visiting London, owes his entry into politics to a unique experiment in Parliamentary democracy.

After the war it was felt that Canadian Servicemen far from home would not have an adequate say in the political future of their country. So Manitoba gave Parliamentary seats to each of the three defence Services. As a Wing Commander in the R.C.A.F., Mr. Turner was elected Air Force member in a fight with four other airmen candidates of varying rank. "I had to do my campaigning entirely by personal letters sent all round the world," he told me.

Now this progressive Canadian has come to London to set up a permanent organisation which will pave the way for trade between Manitoba and Britain.

Ontario's Example

"IN Manitoba," says Mr. Turner, "we have a record of political stability second to none in the Commonwealth. A Liberal Government has been in office since 1922. We have lower taxes than any other province in Canada. Yet visiting British business men stop off at Ottawa or Toronto and rarely go farther west."

Manitoba might well follow the example of the Government of Ontario, which has well-nigh perfect machinery for industrial relations with Britain. From the London offices of the Agent-General for Ontario it is possible to get market research surveys for any British firm wishing to set up business in that province. It is a service which has impressed the Treasury, the Board of Trade and Big Business.

"Eheu Fugaces"

AN elderly friend of mine, reading through the proposal form for a life insurance policy, was touched by the instructions in the final paragraph: "Please answer Questions 4, 5 and 6; then sigh and return to us."